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TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – M & R GROUP
HOME, INC., WALNUT AND TURNING POINT FACILITIES**

We have completed a review of the two agencies operated by the M & R Group Home, Inc., Walnut and Turning Point. Each home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Walnut and Turning Point are six-bed facilities, located in the Third Supervisorial District, that provide care for girls ages 12-18 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Walnut was providing services for six Los Angeles County DCFS children, and Turning Point was providing services for three Los Angeles County DCFS Children and one San Bernardino County DCFS child.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review was to verify that the two agencies were providing the services outlined in their Program Statements. Additionally, the reviews covered basic child safety and licensing issues and included an evaluation of each home's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with two children placed in each home at the time of the reviews. The interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by each facility and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Summary of Findings

Overall, both facilities were providing the services outlined in their Program Statements. However, both facilities need to encourage residents to participate in the planning of activities. In addition, Walnut needs to repair a railing; inform residents of their options to meet the daily cognitive stimulation requirement; and ensure that residents understand the facility's policies and procedures. Turning Point needs to improve its Needs and Services Plans.

Attached are detailed reports of the findings for each home.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the agency's management. The agency's management has agreed to provide DCFS with a written corrective action plan within fifteen business days from the receipt of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our reviews.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Patrick McMahon at (213) 974-0729.

JTM:PM:CC

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
Mary Robinson, Executive Director, M & R Group Homes, Inc.

**M & R GROUP HOME
Walnut Facility
511 Avenida Alipaz
Walnut, CA 91789
(909) 595-9610
License No.: 197800932
Rate Classification Level: 10**

I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Walnut is one of two facilities operated by M & R Group Homes. Located on a residential street, the home was attractive, nicely landscaped, and blended well with other homes in the neighborhood.

The interior of the home was bright, spacious, neat, and clean. The common rooms were nicely decorated, well furnished, and offered a comfortable place for relaxing, studying, socializing, and visitations. The bedrooms were attractive, comfortable, recently painted, and personalized by the residents.

However, the railing at the top of the staircase landing was loose presenting a safety hazard.

Walnut maintained indoor and outdoor recreational equipment in good condition including balls, patio table and chairs, board games, a computer, TV, VCR, and videos. The residents also had access to a variety of reading material through their weekly library visits.

There was a sufficient supply of properly stored frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit.

Recommendations

- 1. Walnut management tighten the railing at the top of the staircase landing.**

II. PROGRAM SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents met Walnut's population criteria as outlined in their program statement. Both residents had been in the facility less than thirty days and did not yet have an initial diagnostic assessment.

Neither resident required a Needs and Services Plan or a Quarterly Report at the time of the review.

Both residents received individual and group therapy.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this section.

III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents were enrolled in school. One resident required and had an Individualized Education Plan and both records contained current report cards.

Staff was actively involved in the educational progress of their residents by maintaining regular communication with the school and providing appropriate educational support and resources needed to meet the academic needs of each resident. The residents were provided with daily cognitive stimulation which included a set two hour time for homework and tutoring. Both residents stated that they did not have regular homework assignments due to their varied educational plans and, as a result, had to sit quietly for the entire two hours. This was discussed with management during the exit conference who stated that because the residents were new to the facility, they were unaware that they could watch the news or read the daily newspaper to meet the cognitive stimulation requirement.

Development of daily living, survival, and emancipation skills was part of Walnut's program. The residents were expected to maintain good personal hygiene, keep their rooms clean, and do their laundry. Age-appropriate residents were involved in emancipation, independent living skills training, and vocational training programs.

The residents were not employed and both were able to spend their allowances as they wanted.

Recommendations

- 2. Walnut management inform the residents of their options to meet the daily two hour cognitive stimulation requirement.**

IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Walnut provided a monthly activity schedule that noted activities for Saturdays and Sundays. Staff was required to follow the activity schedule to which residents could provide input. Community resources were utilized by the facility such as going to parks, malls, libraries, and the local teen center.

The residents expressed a desire to do more activities that would allow them to be out of the house on weekend nights and to have increased social opportunities with peers. This was discussed with management who stated that residents were encouraged to participate in activity planning but because the residents were new to the facility, they had not yet contributed to the activity calendar.

The residents had access to numerous indoor and outdoor recreational activities within the facility. In addition, residents who exhibited appropriate behavior were permitted to engage in self-selected activities.

Transportation was provided to and from activities.

Recommendations

- 3. Walnut management encourage all residents to participate in planning activities that they enjoy and feel are age-appropriate.**

V. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

There were six residents placed in the Walnut facility at the time of the review. A review of case files was not conducted as none of the residents were prescribed psychotropic medications.

Comments:

According to management, there were no residents receiving psychotropic medications.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Residents were informed of the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations at the facility and signed a form indicating such. However, the residents indicated that they did not understand the policies, procedures, or the potential for monetary rewards. The residents reported that the rewards and discipline system in place was consistently enforced and that the consequences for inappropriate behavior were fair.

Both residents were able to have telephone contact with their authorized representatives and stated that they had privacy during telephone calls and visits. Both residents complained that they were not allowed to go into their bedrooms during the day and had to stay in the common areas until bedtime. This was discussed with management who stated that the rule of the residents staying in the common areas during the day was in place to provide better supervision.

The residents stated that they felt safe in the home and that a sufficient number of staff was always in the home when residents were present. The residents indicated that staff treated them well, they were pleased with the quality of their interactions with the staff, and felt that staff was culturally sensitive to each resident's background and ethnicity.

Resident chores included the maintenance of their own rooms and the completion of assigned household tasks which they did not feel was too demanding. The residents felt they were cared for and that their needs were met. They expressed satisfaction with the food and the facility.

The residents were free of interference with daily living functions, had religious freedom, and were aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

- 3. Walnut management ensure that residents understand the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the facility.**

VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The clothing for one resident was of adequate quality and quantity. However, the other resident had been placed by her social worker without a sufficient supply of clothing. Walnut addressed the immediate need of the resident by purchasing some clothing for her pending the receipt of a clothing order from the social worker. Walnut supplied its residents with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars, and the residents were given the opportunity to select their own clothes with the assistance of staff.

The residents received at least the required minimum weekly allowance that they were able to increase based on the agency's behavioral system.

Walnut provided residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

The residents were given life books.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

M & R GROUP HOMES, INC.
M & R Turning Point
511 Old Archibald Rd
Ontario, CA 91789
(909) 973-2927
License No.: 366403424
Rate Classification Level: 10

I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Turning Point is one of two facilities operated by M & R Group Homes. Located on a residential street, the home was spacious, nicely landscaped, and blended well with other homes in the neighborhood.

The interior of the home was bright, spacious, neat, and clean. The common rooms were nicely decorated, well furnished, and offered a comfortable place for relaxing, studying, socializing, and visitations. The bedrooms were attractive, comfortable, recently painted, and personalized by the residents.

Turning Point maintained indoor and outdoor recreational equipment in good condition including balls, patio table and chairs, board games, a computer, TV, VCR and videos. The residents also had access to a variety of reading material through their weekly library visits.

There was a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit, properly stored.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations in this section.

II. PROGRAM SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents met Turning Point's population criteria as outlined in their program statement. One resident received an initial diagnostic assessment and the other resident had been in the facility less than thirty days.

The applicable resident's Needs and Services Plan (NSP) was completed in a timely manner, but did not consistently note the needs of the resident or measurable objectives. The resident and her authorized representative participated in the development and modification of the NSP.

Neither resident required a Quarterly Report at the time of the review.

Both residents received individual and group therapy.

Recommendations

- 1. Turning Point management develop Needs and Services Plans that are specific and measurable.**

III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

One resident attended school, and her records contained an Individualized Education Plan and progress report. The other resident had been at the facility less than two weeks and was not yet enrolled in school, but had visited where she would be attending. The resident's educational documents had not been received by the facility at the time of the review.

Staff was actively involved in the educational progress of their residents by maintaining regular communication with the school(s) and providing appropriate educational support and resources needed to meet the academic needs of each resident. The residents were provided with daily cognitive stimulation which included a set time for homework and tutoring.

Development of daily living, survival, and emancipation skills was part of Turning Point's program. The residents were expected to maintain good personal hygiene, keep their rooms clean, and do their laundry. In addition, they rotated various household chores.

Age-appropriate residents were involved in emancipation, independent living skills training, and vocational training programs.

The residents were not employed and both were able to spend their allowances as they wanted.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Turning Point provided a monthly activity schedule that noted activities for Saturdays and Sundays. Staff was required to follow the activity schedule to which residents could provide input. Community resources were utilized by the facility such as going to parks, malls, libraries, and the local teen center.

The residents expressed a desire to do more age-appropriate activities that would allow them to be out of the house on weekend nights and to have increased social opportunities with peers. One resident stated that plans for Halloween included trick or treating that she felt was a poor comparison to her peers who would attend Halloween costume parties/dances, Knott's Scary Farm and/or see scary movies. This was discussed with management during the exit conference who stated that on Halloween, the residents were taken to a local haunted house.

The residents had access to the numerous indoor and outdoor recreational activities within the facility. In addition, residents who exhibited appropriate behavior were permitted to engage in self-selected activities.

Transportation was provided to and from activities.

Recommendations

- 2. Turning Point management encourage all residents to actively participate in planning activities that they enjoy and feel are age-appropriate.**

V. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

There were four residents placed in the Turning Point facility at the time of the review. A review of case files was not conducted for the three Los Angeles (LA) County residents as none were prescribed psychotropic medications.

Comments:

According to management, there were no LA County residents receiving psychotropic medications.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Residents were informed of the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations of the facility and signed a form indicating such. The residents reported that the rewards and discipline system in place was consistently enforced and that the consequences for inappropriate behavior were fair.

The residents were able to have telephone contact with their authorized representatives, and stated that they had privacy during telephone calls and visits unless otherwise stipulated by their authorized representatives. The residents complained that they were not allowed to go into their bedrooms during the day and had to stay in the common areas until bedtime. This was discussed with management who stated that the rule of the residents staying in the common areas during the day was in place to provide better supervision. It appears that management's policy is reasonable.

The residents stated that they felt safe in the home and that a sufficient number of staff was always in the home when residents were present. The residents indicated that staff treated them well, and they were pleased with the quality of their interactions with the staff, and felt that staff was culturally sensitive to each resident's background and ethnicity.

Resident chores included the maintenance of their own rooms and the completion of assigned household tasks which they did not feel was too demanding. The residents felt they were cared for and that their needs were met. They expressed satisfaction with the food and the facility.

The residents were free of interference with daily living functions, had religious freedom, and were aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Turning Point provided appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. Turning Point supplied its residents with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars, and the residents were given the opportunity to select their own clothes with the assistance of staff. Clothing provided to the residents was of good quality and sufficient quantity.

The residents received at least the required minimum weekly allowance that they were able to increase based on the agency's behavioral system.

Turning Point provided residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

The residents were given life books.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.